

### “The Martyrdom of John and Betty Stam”; “These All Died in Faith”

#### Words to Know

**catchpoll** (kach' pol). A constable or sheriff's deputy.

**harangued** (hə rangd'). Spoke in an angry, ranting way.

**ineffable** (i nef' ə bəl). That cannot be described or expressed in words.

**lower** (ləʊər). To be gloomy, dark, and threatening.

John and Betty did get to give “the gift of utter consecration to the King.” This short excerpt from *The Triumph of John and Betty Stam* tells the

story. We take up the story shortly after they, along with their infant daughter, were taken captive by the communists.

### The Martyrdom of John and Betty Stam

Terror reigned supreme. All who could had fled before the looting of the place began. Betty and John were hurried into the postmaster's shop and left there under guard, thankful to be out of sight of all that was taking place.

“Where are you going?” asked the postmaster, when he recognized the prisoners.

“We do not know where they are going,” John answered simply, “but we are going to heaven.”

The postmaster offered them fruit to eat. Betty took some—she had the baby to nurse—but John made the most of the opportunity for writing again to Shanghai. This note he entrusted to the postmaster to forward for him.

Miaosheo, An.  
December 7, 1934

China Inland Mission

Dear Brethren,

We are in the hands of the communists here, being taken from Tsingteh when they passed through yesterday. I tried to persuade them to let my wife and baby go back from Tsingteh with a letter to you, but they wouldn't let her, and so we both made the trip to Miaosheo today, my wife traveling part of the way on a horse.

They want \$20,000 before they will free us, which we have told them we are sure will not be paid. Famine relief money and our personal money and effects are all in their hands.

God give you wisdom in what you do and give us grace and fortitude. He is able.

Yours in Him,  
John C. Stam

Not a word of self-pity or of fear. Not a sign of faltering. He who had sent them was with them. They were strong in the quiet strength of Him who said: “For this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name.”

Afraid? Of What?

To feel the spirit's glad release?  
To pass from pain to perfect peace,  
The strife and strain of life to cease?  
Afraid—of that?

Afraid? Of What?

Afraid to see the Saviour's face,  
To hear His welcome, and to trace  
The glory gleam from wounds of grace?  
Afraid—of that?

Afraid? Of What?

A flash, a crash, a pierced heart;  
Darkness, light, O Heaven's art!  
A wound of His counterpart!  
Afraid—of that?

Afraid? Of What?

To do by death what life could not—  
Baptize with blood a stony plot,  
Till souls shall blossom from the spot?  
Afraid—of that?

— E. H. Hamilton

“Baptize with blood a stony plot, till souls shall blossom from the spot”—oh, how John and Betty longed, whether by life or by death, to win precious souls to Christ from South Anhwei!

Little remains to be told for, thank God, their sufferings were not prolonged. When the communists again turned their attention to them, they were taken to a house belonging to some wealthy man who had fled. There they were put in a room in an inner courtyard, closely guarded by soldiers, and though Betty seems to have been left free to care for the baby, John was tightly bound with ropes to a post of the high, heavy bed.

How long must have seemed the hours of that winter night when he was not able to move or even change his position!

I'm standing, Lord:  
There is a mist that blinds my sight.  
Steep jagged rocks, front, left, and right,  
**Lower**, dim, gigantic, in the night.  
Where is the way?

I'm standing, Lord:  
The black rock hems me in behind.  
Above my head a moaning wind  
Chills and oppresses heart and mind.  
I am afraid!

He answered me, and on His face  
A look **ineffable** of grace,  
Of perfect, understanding love,  
Which all my murmuring did remove.

I'm standing, Lord:  
Since Thou hast spoken, Lord, I see  
Thou hast beset—these rocks are Thee!  
And, since Thy love encloses me,  
I stand and sing.

— Betty Stam

No one knows what passed between John and Betty. Those hours are sacred to Him who, for love of us, hung long hours in darkness upon a cross. Certain it is that His love, His nearness strengthened them, for Betty was able to plan with all a mother's tenderness for the infant they

might have to leave behind, alone and orphaned. Could that little life survive? And if it did, what then? But had they not given her to God? Would He not care for His own?

Never was that little one more precious than when they looked their last on her baby sweetness, as they were summoned next morning and led out to die. Yet there was no weakening. Those who witnessed the tragedy marveled, as they testify, at the calmness with which both John and Betty faced the worst their misguided enemies could do. Theirs was the moral, spiritual triumph in that hour when the very forces of hell seemed to be let loose. Painfully bound with ropes, their hands behind them, stripped of their outer garments and John barefooted (he had given Betty his socks to wear), they passed down the street where he was known to many, while the Reds shouted their ridicule and called the people to come and see the execution.

Like their Master, they were led up a little hill outside the town. There, in a clump of pine trees, the communists **harangued** the unwilling onlookers, too terror-stricken to utter protest. But one man broke the ranks! The doctor of the place and a Christian expressed the feelings of many when he fell on his knees and pleaded for the life of his friends. Angrily repulsed by the Reds, he still persisted, until he was dragged away as prisoner, to suffer death when it appeared that he too was a follower of Christ.

John had turned to the leader of the band, asking mercy for that man, when he was sharply ordered to kneel—and the look of joy on his face afterward told of the unseen Presence with them as his spirit was released. Betty was seen to quiver, but only for a moment. Bound as she was, she fell on her knees beside him. A quick command, the flash of a sword, which mercifully she did not see—and they were reunited.

From *The Triumph of John and Betty Stam*, by Mrs. Howard Taylor.



### Answer these questions.

1. a. What in John's response to the postmaster shows that he was aware that they would be killed?

- b. What indications of this awareness do you see in his letter?

## Lesson 11

2. In what way could what happened on the hill that day be called a triumph?

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**Complete these activities about the two poems in the account.**

3. Complete these statements to summarize each stanza of the first poem.

a. I am not afraid to die because \_\_\_\_\_

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b. I am not afraid to die because \_\_\_\_\_

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c. I am not afraid to die because \_\_\_\_\_

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d. I am not afraid to die because \_\_\_\_\_

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4. Tertullian, an early church father, wrote, "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church." Write the line from this poem that shows that this author agreed with Tertullian.

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5. Explain how the second poem is fitting at this point in the account.

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6. Tell which stanza is the turning point in the poem. \_\_\_\_\_

7. Explain how this stanza differs in rhyme and meter from the other three.

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8. Read Revelation 12:11 and list three things about how those spoken of there became overcomers.

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The Hutterites are a group who from their beginning as a separate Anabaptist group in Austria in the year 1528, kept a written chronicle of their group. The earlier part of the chronicle includes records of other Anabaptists of the time.

The selection that follows appears at the end of a table showing a list of various cities and districts, with the number of martyrs in each. The table, written in 1542, records the martyrdom of 2,173 men and women who died for their faith.

## These All Died in Faith

No human being was able to take away out of their hearts what they had experienced, such zealous lovers of God were they. The fire of God burned within them. They would die the bitterest death, yea they would die ten deaths rather than to forsake the divine truth which they had espoused.

They had drunk of the water which is flowing from God's sanctuary, yea of the water of life. They realized that God helped them to bear the cross and to overcome the bitterness of death. The fire of God burned within them. Their tent they had pitched not here upon earth, but in eternity, and of their faith they had a foundation and assurance. Their faith blossomed like a lily, their loyalty as a rose, their piety and candor as the flower of the garden of God. The angel of the Lord battled for them that they could not be deprived of the helmet of salvation. Therefore they have borne all torture and agony without fear. The things of this world they counted in their holy mind only as shadows, having the assurance of greater things. They were thus drawn unto God that they knew nothing, sought nothing, desired nothing, loved nothing but God alone. Therefore they had more patience in their suffering than their enemies in tormenting them.

From the shedding of such innocent blood arose Christians everywhere, brothers all, for all this persecution did not take place without fruit. Many were moved thereby to give thought to these things, and to order their thinking, and doing and living in the light of the future, so many indeed that finally the authorities in many places would no longer execute the martyrs publicly, as for instance in the Tyrol, but condemned and slew them secretly by night so that the people could not know of it.

In some places they literally filled the prisons and dungeons with them, as did the Count Palatine. The persecutors thought they could dampen and extinguish the fire of God. But the prisoners sang in their prisons and rejoiced so that the enemies outside became much more fearful than the prisoners and did not know what to

do with them. Many others lay for years in dungeons and prisons and endured all sorts of pain and torture. Others had holes burned through their cheeks and were then let free.

The rest, who escaped all this, were driven from one land to another, from one town to the next. They had to be like owls and bitterns which dare not be seen by daylight. Often they had to hide away in rocks and cliffs, in wild forests, in caves and holes in the earth to save their lives. They were sought by **catchpolls** and dogs, hunted and were taken down like birds. All were without guilt, without the least wicked deed, since they neither did nor desired to do any one the least harm or injury.

Everywhere they were cursed and slandered and lied about scandalously. It was said of them that they could bring people under their control by giving them to drink from a little flask. Scandalous lies were told about them, such as having their women in common. They were slandered devilishly as Anabaptists, seducers, rioters, fanatics. Everywhere were issued imperial, royal and princely mandates, decrees, and commands against them.

Many were talked to in wonderful ways, often day and night. They were argued with, with great cunning and cleverness, with many sweet and smooth words, by monks and priests, by doctors of theology, with much false testimony, with threats and scolding and mockery, yea, with lies and grievous slanders against the brotherhood, but none of these things moved them or made them falter.

Some sang praises to God while they lay in grievous imprisonment, as though they were in great joy. Some did the same as they were being led to the place of execution and death, singing joyfully with uplifted voice that it rang out loud. Others stepped to the place of death with a smile on their lips, praising God that they were accounted worthy to die the death of the Christian hero, and would not have preferred even to die a natural death.

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### Answer these questions.

9. What factor, mentioned in the first sentence, served to motivate these martyrs to faithfulness?

## Lesson 11

10. Other selections also mentioned this factor. In which verse of “Ministers of Reconciliation” did Paul mention it? \_\_\_\_\_
11. Write the line of “Spikenard Very Precious” that also mentions it. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
12. The author contrasts temporal things with eternal things.
  - a. What two words does he use of their faith that show it was solidly based?  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - b. What did they consider temporal things to be? \_\_\_\_\_
13. a. What evidence is given of the truthfulness of Tertullian’s statement? (No. 4)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
b. What evidence is given that even their persecutors recognized this principle?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



**Read 1 Peter 4:12, 13 and answer these questions.**

14. In 1 Peter 4:12, what does Peter say we are not to do when persecution comes?  
\_\_\_\_\_
15. What does he say in verse 13 that we are to do? Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
16. What are some evidences that the martyrs in this selection obeyed Peter’s command in verse 13?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



**Complete these activities.**

17. Copy the sentence from the second paragraph that contains several similes.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
18. Find and copy one metaphor from the second paragraph. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
19. Write the Beatitude (Matt. 5:3-12) that best shows that Christians can expect the kind of treatment that is recorded in the sixth paragraph. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### “Why We Preach”; “The Zealous Man”

#### Word to Know

**sophistry** (sä' fə strē). Subtly deceptive reasoning; arguments used to deceive.

Menno Simons, a Dutch Anabaptist leader, wrote this in reply to a state church preacher who accused the Anabaptists of sowing “pernicious

seed, not only by secret preaching at night, but also by publications, letters, etc.”

#### Why We Preach

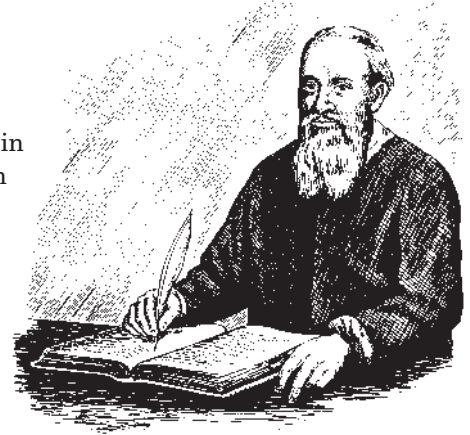
I reply with holy David: We believe, therefore we speak, and consequently we must suffer tribulation. For since God, the merciful Father, has given us, poor creatures, the gift of His grace, has bestowed upon us the Spirit of His love from on high, through His Son Jesus Christ, and has dripped into our hearts the heavenly dew of His love; has opened the seven seals of the book of His knowledge; has disclosed the mystery of His divine Word and pleasure; has roused us from the dead and led us into life, has given us a new heart, mind, and disposition, and has nourished us with the bread of life so that we by His grace have found the precious pearl, the rich treasure, and eternal abiding peace, which we could not possibly acquire through the deceiving doctrine, clever **sophistry**, and false consolations of the learned ones; therefore it is that we would teach, proclaim, and impress on all men to the best of our ability, this revealed grace of His great love toward us in order that they may enjoy with us the same joy and renewal of spirit, and know and taste with all saints how sweet, how good, and how kind that Lord is to whom we have come.

Therefore, we preach, as much as is possible, both by day and by night, in houses and in fields, in forests and wastes, hither and yon, at home or

abroad, in prisons and in dungeons, in water and in fire, on the scaffold and on the wheel, before lords and

princes, through mouth and pen, with possessions and blood, with life and death. We have done this these many years, and we are not ashamed of the Gospel of the glory of Christ. Romans 1:16. For we feel His living fruit and moving power in our hearts, as may be seen in many places by the lovely patience and willing sacrifices of our faithful brethren and companions in Christ Jesus.

We could wish that we might save all mankind from the jaws of hell, free them from the chains of their sins, and by the gracious help of God add them to Christ by the Gospel of His peace. For this is the true nature of the love which is of God.



Reprinted by permission of Herald Press, Scottdale, Pa. from *The Complete Writings of Menno Simons* by Menno Simons/J. C. Wenger, Editor.



#### Answer these questions.

1. Menno loved the church. What do you see in this short article that shows that his goal was for the lost to be brought into the brotherhood and to be made a part of it?

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## Lesson 12

2. In the list of places in which Menno says he preached, what place is missing that you would expect to find in such a list? \_\_\_\_\_
3. For some of these places it is easy to understand how the Anabaptists preached. But what do you think Menno meant by the following?
  - a. in water: \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. in fire: \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. on the scaffold: \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. on the wheel: \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. with possessions: \_\_\_\_\_
  - f. with blood: \_\_\_\_\_
  - g. with life: \_\_\_\_\_
  - h. with death: \_\_\_\_\_
4. What three things did Menno and his fellow Christians wish for all men?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



### Complete these activities.

5. Menno's writing abounds with allusions to Scripture. Write a phrase from the first paragraph beside each of these Scripture references.
  - a. Psalm 116:10 \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Eph. 2:8 \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Rom. 5:5 \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. Rev. 5:1-7 \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. Eph. 1:9 \_\_\_\_\_
  - f. Rom. 6:4 \_\_\_\_\_
  - g. Ezek. 36:26 \_\_\_\_\_
  - h. John 6:35 \_\_\_\_\_
  - i. Matt. 13:46 \_\_\_\_\_
  - j. Matt. 13:44 \_\_\_\_\_
6. Using Bible helps, tell what New Testament writer also quoted David's words from Psalm 116:10a and give the reference of the quote. \_\_\_\_\_
7. Write a one-line summary of each paragraph of "Why We Preach."
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_



God needs committed, zealous men and women. What does it mean to be a zealous person, particularly in the area of religion? J. C. Ryle, the

Bishop of Liverpool in the latter 1800s, answers that question in this excerpt from his book *Practical Religion*.

## The Zealous Man

A zealous man in religion is preeminently a man of one thing. It is not enough to say that he is earnest, hearty, uncompromising, thorough-going, whole-hearted, fervent in spirit. He only sees one thing, he cares for one thing, he lives for one thing, he is swallowed up in one thing; and that one thing is to please God. Whether he lives, or whether he dies,—whether he has health, or whether he has sickness,—whether he is rich, or whether he is poor,—whether he pleases man, or whether he gives offence,—whether he is thought wise, or whether he is thought foolish,—whether he gets blame, or whether he gets praise,—whether he gets honor, or whether he gets shame,—for all this the zealous man cares nothing at all. He burns for one thing; and that one thing is to please God, and to advance God's glory.

If he is consumed in the very burning, he cares not for it,—he is content. He feels that, like a lamp, he is made to burn; and if consumed in burning, he has but done the work for which God appointed him.

Such an one will always find a sphere for his zeal. If he cannot preach, and work, and give money, he will cry, and sigh, and pray. Yes: if he is only a pauper, on a perpetual bed of sickness, he will make the wheels of sin around him drive heavily, by continually interceding against it. If he cannot fight in the valley with Joshua, he will do the work of Moses, Aaron, and Hur, on the hill. If he is cut off from working himself, he will give the Lord no rest till help is raised up from another quarter, and the work is done. This is what I mean when I speak of “zeal” in religion.

— J. C. Ryle



### Complete these statements.

8. The repetition of several ideas and words in the first paragraph helps to strengthen this writing.

a. The zealous man is described as a *man of one thing* because

“he \_\_\_\_\_ one thing,  
 he \_\_\_\_\_ one thing,  
 he \_\_\_\_\_ one thing,  
 he \_\_\_\_\_ one thing, . . .  
 he \_\_\_\_\_ one thing.”

b. The zealous man does not care

“whether he \_\_\_\_\_ or whether he \_\_\_\_\_ —  
 whether he \_\_\_\_\_ or whether he \_\_\_\_\_ —  
 whether he \_\_\_\_\_ or whether he \_\_\_\_\_ —  
 whether he \_\_\_\_\_ or whether he \_\_\_\_\_ —  
 whether he \_\_\_\_\_ or whether he \_\_\_\_\_ —  
 whether he \_\_\_\_\_ or whether he \_\_\_\_\_ —  
 whether he \_\_\_\_\_ or whether he \_\_\_\_\_ .”



## Lessons 12, 13

9. The second paragraph could be summed up this way: The truly zealous man will find a way to \_\_\_\_\_ —if he cannot do anything else, he will at least \_\_\_\_\_ ;  
If he cannot work himself, he will pray until \_\_\_\_\_ .



**Answer these questions.**

10. In what way does the zealous man consider himself like a lamp? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
11. a. In what does the zealous man find contentment? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- b. In “Spikenard Very Precious,” in what did Mary find contentment? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- c. From these two examples, what is necessary for the Christian to be content?  
\_\_\_\_\_
12. What is meant by the figure of speech “make the wheels of sin . . . drive heavily”? (This is an allusion to Exodus 14:25.) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
13. In the battle recorded in Exodus 17:9-13, many men had a part in defeating the enemy. What part did each of the following have?
- a. Joshua \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Moses \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Aaron and Hur \_\_\_\_\_
14. In Philippians 3:13, 14, Paul writes, “This one thing I do.” What is that one thing (a), and what other two things does he mention that he does in connection with it (b, c)?
- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

## Lesson 13

### “Make Me Thy Fuel”; “Drums in the Night”

#### Word to Know

**sward** (swórd). A grass-covered area of ground.